From A. Brooke

Oakland April 14th 1848

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My Dear Friend.

GARRISON MSS

I forward by the mail bearing this, The Sabbath Recorder, of March 23rd containing Judge O'Neal's decision in the case of the city council of Charleston vs A Benjamin. Not unlikely you may have seen it before but uncertain in regard to this and desiring it to come under your notice I have procured it from a friend for the purpose. The violation of the rights of conscience, and of the constitutional rights of the individual which it exhibits as well as the sophistry employed to disguise the wrong, should be published through the length and breadth of the land.

This sacred regard for the Sabbath, this coercion of obedience to "an ordinance for the better observance of the Lord's day as a day of rest," comes with an especial grace from [illegible] which pronounced sentence of death the same [illegible] his affianced wife to against John L Brown for assisting [illegible]ced escape from slavery! I wish the sentence pronoun[illegible] this righteous judge against A Benjamin could be hunted up & published with the accompanying decision, side by side with the sentence of death pronounced on Brown.

My wife, a firm disunionist by the way has puzzled herself in vain to discover a meaning in a favorite quotation, "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell". Although aware it is a Scriptural quotation she is so unfortunately organised as to be unable to venerate what she does not understand. To obtain the beauty of variety without perhaps losing any thing in definiteness of idea she proposes occasionally to substitute for it " ~~an agreement with mud~~ " a covenant with mud and an agreement with ashes." Perhaps you can explain why the original phrase is best and most expressive, but I believe I could not. Some future spiritualiser might perchance be able to discover a deep meaning in the employment of the term "mud" as representing the earth to which we all must return, and in "ashes" could perceive a signification of what the souls (or bodies) of the non-elect could never arrive at during endless burnings! To be serious — may we not do more for mankind by omitting the use of language which can only excite a blind veneration? I know that habit, & association of ideas renders it hard to avoid them.

I begin to see dim in the distance a time when ~~I~~ shall be ready to renew my subscription to the Liberator — Till then I shall read it without paying for it — at every opportunit

Must men move in an orbit deter-
of grav-itation.
-ned by the attraction

For several years I have been out of mine if this be the true one, and it will take me some time since falling into it again, to bring things round. ~~again~~ Till I do, and after, believe me affectionately your friend

A Brooke,

P.S. I noticed some time since, in the remarks made by you, I believe before a committee, on the ~~the~~ capital punishment question, that you assumed as a position, the individual possessing no right to govern his neighbor, could not of course confer that right which he did not possess upon a representative.

I state the idea in my own words not having yours by me to refer to. I was pleased to see it. I have employed it habitually for several years to stop the mouths of government men and have never met with a man of sense who could gainsay it or do more than hold his peace. A simpleton can and will argue without any basis. but the intelligent man who does not go to a Divine Source as the authority for human governments but admits them to rest only on the basis claimed for them by the Declaration of Independence, "the consent of the governed" is silenced at once. How does our acute friend W. Philips manage to continue to be a government man? I wish he would tell us. He says so many good things I should like to see how he would look dealing out absurdities. Could not some of our most logical non-resistants in or about Boston be induced to issue a tract upon "Human governments, their origin, and value to mankind" — elucidating the extent of human rights?

I have luckily got on to so vile a sheet of paper it will perhaps do to shuffle my sins of scribbling upon it in addition to its own and allow me to go Scott free,

A B.

Oakland O.
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paid 10

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Massachusetts.

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